

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read one more letter from a real person in my district, another victim of the Gingrich shutdown philosophy.

Mr. Edwards: I used to live on welfare but I fought my way out of the system. I'm employed at the VA hospital in Temple, Texas as a certified surgical tech. I'm not on food stamps, AFDC or Medicaid anymore. I support my children and take care of them through my job which I am not being paid for. The check I was to receive on January 2 was for rent, electric bills, food and gas. My 9-year-old's birthday had to be put on hold until I start getting paid again. I wish they could have felt my heartbreak when I told him and he started to cry.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to pass a resolution to put the Government and decent, hardworking Federal employees back to work. We can do that if Mr. GINGRICH and the House Republicans will let us take 15 minutes to vote in favor of a clean continuing resolution.

NO COUNTERPROPOSAL RECEIVED IN BUDGET DEBATE

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. The previous speaker and all the others, they all voted against the override. If you wanted to get this birthday party done, you want to help these people out, why do you not vote for the bills? It is that simple.

The President has vetoed Interior, which would open national parks; the Justice Department; Commerce VA; HUD; EPA. These are all real things that would have opened the government. And yes, there is plenty of time to continue debating these issues and these spending levels. If you did not like this year's appropriations, go for it next year. Try to put in more money. We know you like to spend. But the President had vetoed these things and we have not seen yet a counterproposal.

That is what we have been looking for since November a counterproposal. What I do think is I share your concern about the furloughed employees. I want them to go back to work. I am not against a CR. But what I wish is that you would have the same urgency about the \$20 billion a month we are spending in interest on the national debt. This money is going to be paid for by your children and my children. Let us show them the same compassion you pretend to show other groups.

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TAX BREAK: CROWN JEWEL OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the budget negotiators finally got to the key issue in the budget debate:

whether or not we are going to provide a \$245 billion tax break largely for the rich in this country as part of the 7-year balanced budget plan.

The Republican Party considers the tax cut for the rich to be the crown jewel in their Contract With America, and they have promised to keep the Government shut down until we give this tax break to the rich. The crown jewel is a good metaphor, for without the tax cut for the rich, the contract will not sparkle, it will not shine. But it is a jewel at a great price. To pay it, we must cut student loans, we must slash Medicare, we must cut Medicaid, we must slash environmental programs.

The Gingrich budget promises 7 years of milk and honey and tax breaks for the rich, but 7 years of financial famine and locusts for the working-class people of our country.

FOCUS ON BALANCING THE BUDGET

(Mr. MCINNIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the gentleman's cute props and while I appreciate my colleague's earlier statements about the child that was crying, certainly we divert from the primary issue here, and that is to balance the budget for the Federal Government and focus on some short-term hardships.

We understand there are hardships out there. I have got a program that I am going to talk about on a 5-minute special order on how we can help on some of those, but do not let us lose focus on the most important issue facing this country in generations, and that is to balance this budget, to control Government spending. Remember, right now this Government spends \$30 million an hour more than it brings in, and if you want to talk about an impact on the children and the future of this country, it is handing them this credit card, the congressional voting card, which is accumulating that kind of debt. That is what is going to break the backbone of this country.

We can focus on these short-term hardships. We can do something about it. But until we address the long-term problem, we are not going to get anywhere.

BRING UP THE LINE-ITEM VETO

(Mr. KANJORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I could not help but hear some of my colleagues on the other side engage in some rhetoric which I think is unfortunate at this time, I might say, on our side also. It sort of indicates where this impasse is starting to take this Congress, and I hope the American people

will give us a little sufferance here because if they do not, they may start to believe that we have defeated the success of representative democracy in America under the Constitution as we know it.

The fact of the matter is we have a fundamental philosophical disagreement here, and we may have to recognize we are not going to come to a conclusion on it. We may not get an agreement on reconciliation and balancing the budget.

But this country must go on. What I would suggest is there is a tool, although I disagree with the tool, that was passed by this House and by this Senate but not sent to the President, that would resolve this problem, and that is the line-item veto. If the conference committee will meet today, agree on a conference report between the House and the Senate, bring it back to this House and send it to the President so he can sign it, he will have the authority to take the objectionable parts out of the appropriations bills which are keeping this Government shut down.

LET US GET TO A REASONABLE BUDGET AGREEMENT

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of hot air about tax cuts for the rich, tax cuts for the rich. Well, as many of the Members know, myself and another Member who is sitting in the body today earlier in the year worked hard to lower the tax cap for the \$500-per-child tax credit. The conference bill is currently at \$75,000 for a single earner and \$110,000 for a couple.

Most people would say that that is reasonable, especially if you look at the fact that in 1950 the average income-earner family in this country was sending 5 percent of their income to Washington for Federal taxes and today it is over 25 percent. Remember also the President himself introduced a bill that had some tax cuts in it.

So I think what we are working at now, and as we said all along in the continuing resolution, was that we would put everything on the table, the level of tax cuts. The President has his. We have ours. Let us get some numbers and come to an agreement.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. I have sat here and listened to my Republican colleagues from Georgia and from the panhandle of Florida talk about what they really want in a budget. Maybe they need to call home and ask how many of their seniors are not being